

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 24-53 are pending. Claims 1-18 and 27-53 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 19-22 are rejected 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,077,693. Claims 24-26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By this reply, Applicants cancel claims 1-22 and 27-53, amend claims 24-26, add new claims 54-60, and address each of the Office's objections and rejections.

Support for the Amendment

Support for the amendment to present claims 24-26 is found in prior claims 19. Support for new claims 54-60 is found in prior claims 20-22. No new matter is added by the amendment.

Claim Objections

The Office objects to claims 24-26, stating that they are "dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims" (Office Action, p. 4). As suggested by the Office, Applicants have amended present claims 24-26 so that they are now presented in independent form, including all of the limitations of prior independent claim 19. Applicants submit that claims 24-26, as well as claims 54, 55, and 56 dependent from independent claims 24-26, respectively, are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office rejects claims 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,077,693. As is discussed above, Applicants have cancelled claims 19-22. Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 24-26 and 54-60 are in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If there are any additional charges or any credits, please apply them to Deposit Account No. 03-2095.

Respectfully submitted,

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